

Dear Jim,

9/8/72

In the ten days since you wrote your Watergate memo of 8/29 I think I detect a subtle change, that the justified desperation has been ameliorated by the incompetence confronting it and by the total failure of the press. I now anticipate that aside from the hopeless five, whose silence should by now have been bought, there may be one or two sacrificial goats, dedicated or bribed to be content with temporary sacrifice.

There is nothing wrong with your logic that ends up CIA. I certainly can't disprove it. But I don't go for it. My candidates center around the Colsons. And not on evidence as much as instinct and a couple of things about the CIA: if they'd done it, they'd have used those not as easily traced to it; and they'd have been a bit more professional about it.

Take you Will's illustration, for example. He was not bright but dumb. Finding doors taped after 1 a.m. and doing nothing?

True, there was no need to tape latches for a bugging operation with a locksmith in the gang. But suppose the gang planned to be going up and down stairs? Locksmith each trip? Why have five for a bugging a week after a productive but time-consuming photographing of files when it is so much easier and faster to steal them, especially after Jack Anderson has used some? It was easier and faster for some to steal while others copied.

I still lean to the Dirty Dickery of the farright GOP and the desperation because all finally knew and feared the consequences if the press or the Democrats performed well, as neither has to date.

In fact, I can't recall a single story of consequence of which I can tell myself that it resulted from journalistic diligence. I also can't think of one of which I can tell myself it just could not have been planted.

I still regard the post-arrest stuff as one of the better examples of professional news management, enough being leaked at the right time to kill the natural instinct to seek and probe.

Take Liddy, for example. Just before Larry O'Brien says too little about tapping it is leaked that Liddy had a dedicated YAF/FBI thing on indiscriminate tapping.

O'Brien's newest disclosure is that there had been an effort to tap McG hq phones. If the CIA or FBI had been interested in that, they'd have done it at the phone company panel, not with those who could be seen or with means easily detected today.

On your rising star of General Haig, I've put the latest in the 3rd class mailing. It is now close to zenith.

Your generous mailing of clips includes what I'd not seen. Names, such as Dominick's not having been mentioned here.

One of the more interesting is Je's excerpting of the SFExam 8/24 quoting Spirodevitch's "We'll have to take responsibility for it," more quotable in 1976 than of use in 1972.

(I didn't remember Mitchell's "chortling" of 8/9, but he hasn't done much since!)

There is too much effort to persuade that good old Mike Richardson is all-American truth-teller. Comparing the AP and Times service stories of 9/1 can be interesting, as can be taking the Times' apart. On the one hand, "he had not thought too much about the pictures" (Times), which is less than incredible given the description attributed to him, in the same story. AP's account, that "when he began to develop...he started to suspect 'some sort of hanky-panky'." Who could fail to? Especially when he got a bonus of \$40 for a job on which he'd not lose money at that total price and for which he actually got \$100. (AP says he got a \$10.00 tip but makes no mention of the third man).

AP says the FBI told him to expect to be called before the DC grand jury in June. What better reason for it not having happened by September when we have Kleindienst's assurance there will be no "Watergate Whitewash"?

So, we've got this clod too stupid to know anything about the documents he reads but not too stupid to bleed the customer and not too stupid to remember them, whether or not he immediately recognized hanky-panky (Times says not).

But the Times has a non-description description of the third man. They couldn't even ask an estimate of his age, and were suddenly restricted to the pictures of the five that had appeared?

And how could All-American Mike fail to pass his lie-detector test with "flying colors" when he has given only contradictory versions of the essence of his story-- but not in public until it has begun to wear a bit thin?...One more hunch: hiring Sheridan to be the Democrats' investigator simplifies the feeding schedule of his former friends and associates. Shows ahead. Not a bit of pabulum on the bib yet! Best and thanks much for clips, JW